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ABSTRACT

The completion of the single market by the end of 1992 will remove internal obstacles to the free flow of goods and services within the European Community. The implications for education and training, and in particular for those colleges selling customized updating and similar courses to companies and organizations, are far-reaching. This bulletin identifies those aspects of the 1992 reforms that are likely to affect colleges and other providers of education and training. It also considers changing training needs and looks at some models for curriculum development, with the emphasis on the kind of short course training being promoted by the United Kingdom's Department of Education and Science in its PICKUP updating skills program. Three case studies, involving community law and trading, language training, and quality assurance, are included in the paper. (KC)

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The completion of the single market by the end of 1992 will remove internal obstacles to the free flow of goods and services within the European Community.

Businesses based both in the Community and elsewhere will be able to operate in a unified market of 323 million consumers living in the 12 member states – from Cadiz to Copenhagen, from Athens to Aberdeen.

By the end of 1988, more than 200 measures had been agreed and were being implemented, at a rate of about two a week.

They cover everything from the harmonisation of technical standards and the implementation of Community-wide controls on consumer protection and labelling to freedom of movement for capital and the mutual recognition of professional qualifications.

The implications for education and training, and, in particular, for those colleges selling tailormade updating and similar courses to companies and organisations, are far-reaching.

The Further Education Unit and 1992

FEU aims to support college preparations for 1992 in four ways, by:

- collecting, evaluating and disseminating appropriate information;
- helping colleges to improve their capability to provide short, tailormade training for business and the professions;
- considering the wider implications of the 1992 reforms for other, more traditional, areas of college work;
- identifying examples of relevant and successful schemes and activities in Britain's 11 partner states.

Overall, the special emphasis of the Unit's support will be on the comparative experience of learners throughout the Community.

This fits in with the Unit's current strategy objectives, which fall into three important programme areas:

- the development and assessment of competence;
- curriculum planning, management and evaluation;
- 'individualised learning'.

This bulletin identifies those aspects of the 1992 reforms that are likely to affect colleges and other providers of education and training. It also considers changing training needs and looks at some models for curriculum development, with the emphasis on the kind of short course

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Opportunity 1992

College courses and the Single European Market

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training being promoted by the Department of Education and Science's PICKUP updating skills programme.

It was written by Edwin Nelson and Ann Hitchman of the Durham Colleges Consortium for Training and prepared for publication for FEU by Mike Duckenfield.

Additional work, comparing the experience of learners in four vocational areas in four European countries, is currently being undertaken by the Unit, with support from the Training Agency. Further information on this is available from Martin Johnson at FEU (see end of this bulletin for address).

Market opportunity

Many private sector training providers have been quick to respond to the government's 1992 awareness campaign, as have employer and trade organisations.

Chambers of commerce, for example, are offering one-day seminars designed to help firms consider the steps they need to take to compete effectively in the Europe of the 1990s.

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) has launched a nationwide series of seminars under the banner 'CBI Initiative 1992 — Preparing British Business'. This consists of a programme of 10 full-day seminars in 13 locations throughout the United Kingdom during 1989.

There is, nonetheless, considerable scope for colleges, polytechnics and universities to develop and modify the training programmes and related activities which they provide to industry and commerce, so as to take advantage of opportunities arising from '1992'.

Information on 1992

Progress towards the unified market is being charted in a series of publications issued by the Department of Trade and Industry. *Single Market News,* a 32-page broadsheet, appears quarterly and is available free on request.

Similarly, the Department issues an information pack, with single sheets explaining each aspect of the reforms, and there is a 'hotline' for enquiries (01-200 1992).

Scope of the reforms

The removal of trading barriers fall into three broad areas: those relating to physical movement, technical issues and fiscal regulations.

Physical movement

This includes the introduction of a common European passport, the abolition of border controls for Community citizens and the reduction of obstacles to employment in other member countries.

The introduction of a Single Administrative Document will replace the many national forms currently needed in the movement of manufactured goods across borders, and there will be mutual recognition of health checks by member states in the movement of animals and plants. Inspections performed on departure and certified on arrival will eliminate frontier controls for agricultural produce.

Until now, transport between member states has been controlled by quotas which limit the number of journeys by foreign hauliers. These restrictions will be reduced, then abolished, allowing free movement of goods through a common transport policy. Safety standards for vehicles will also be uniform.

Technical issues

Standards and regulations in health and safety will be harmonised, and there will be legislation to outlaw the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition within the Community.

A reform of particular significance for colleges is that of mutual recognition of vocational qualifications. CEDEFOP, the Berlin-based European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, is currently examining job content in several occupational areas in order to assist this. The first three are the hotel and catering trade, construction and motor vehicle repair. A second group, soon to reach final stages of comparison, includes textiles and clothing, electrical goods and services and agriculture, and a third group, recently announced for research, covers metal-working and construction, office work and the chemical industries.

A number of European Commission directives now exist, enabling professionals in many areas to practise throughout the 12 nations, provided that they meet specified requirements on supervised training and experience. These include architects, dentists, doctors, midwives, nurses, pharmacists and veterinary surgeons.

Other reforms of technical matters range from a single group of standards for satellite broadcasting and creation of a Community structure for trademark, patent and copyright law to abolition of protectionist policies in road, rail, marine and air transport and the liberalisation of financial services.

Fiscal regulations

Proposals under consideration in this area include the introduction of a clearing mechanism, whereby revenue may be collected by one member state on behalf of another, with balances regularly settled, and a gradual reduction of the differences between levels of indirect tax operated by individual states.

The training market

This has several important characteristics:

- Updating training is essentially market-led and suppliers have to be active and adaptable to win business.
- Collaboration with industrial and business organisations increases sensitivity to market needs.
- Employers' needs come first: 'training' is a possible solution to their business and operational needs. (The 1992 reforms themselves do not determine needs but provide a new context for them.)

The pace with which the 1992 reforms are being introduced requires an equally rapid response from colleges. But there may be problems in finding the flexibility necessary to resource the development of training capability and a shortage of expertise in matters related to the single market.

Colleges may find it helpful, therefore, to make use of outside experts – private trainers and consultants. In seeking to provide training to companies, particularly small and medium-sized firms, they may also find it useful to support this with advice and consultancy.

A strategic model

As the market of training related to 1992 is not yet well defined, curriculum development must be accompanied by market research. There is also a continuing role for awareness raising to stimulate employers to assess for themselves the possible impact of the reforms on their own operations.

Market research is an essential source of intelligence for curriculum development, but the immediacy of some training needs is such that the two – research and course development – should be conducted in parallel so that each informs the other and highlights any requirements for staff development.

A marketing approach also, of course, requires that college trainers themselves keep informed of progress towards the single market.

Considerations for colleges can be reduced to four main areas:

- information sources and the monitoring of progress towards European integration;
- changes in vocational and employer training needs;
- implications for college curricula;
- staff development.

The wider context

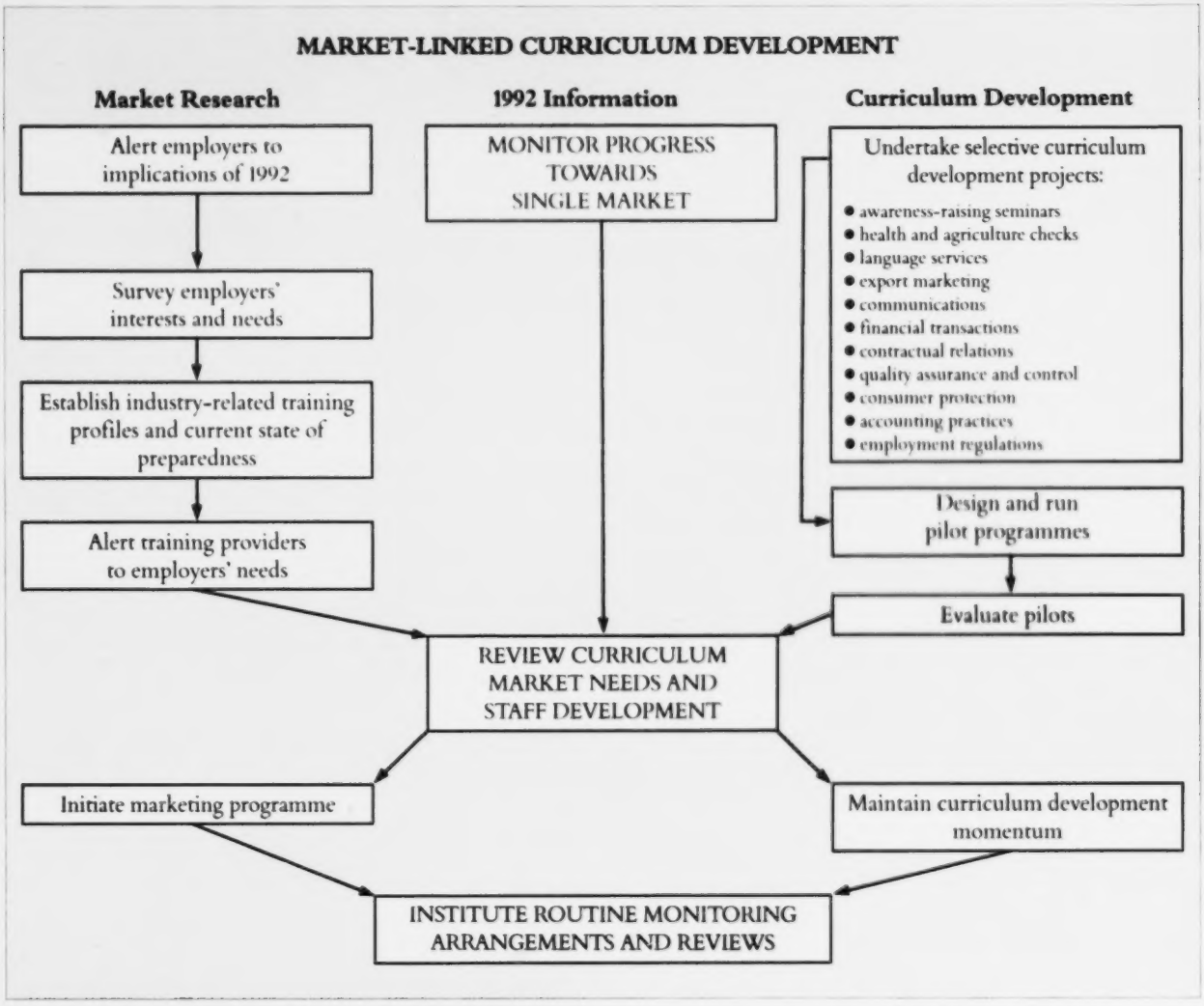
Developments arising from 1992 should be viewed as one important area of change among several. Others include:

- the evolution of YTS and Employment Training, and the part they will play in providing vocational skills into the next decade. Proposed priority areas for skill development in ET include new technology applications in industry, catering, tourism, retailing and information technology;
- European Community programmes such as Lingua, which seeks to promote linguistic ability among employees, and the technology training programme COMETT;
- the Education Reform Act 1988 and the White Paper *Employment for the 1990s*, which will transform the management of colleges and the way in which local training markets are organised;
- National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), which will increasingly provide a framework for the assessment of vocational competence.

In the short term, the main response to 1992 is likely to be in short updating and training courses for companies. In the longer term, mainstream college courses will increasingly acquire appropriate European content.

A project, funded through the (then) Mutual Development Fund managed by the Training Agency, is examining implications for mainstream curricula in construction, modern languages, electronics and financial services. Another project, due to report in 1990, also funded by the Training Agency in conjunction with FEU, is looking at four occupational sectors in Europe: travel and business, the electrical goods industry, construction and motor vehicle maintenance. Networks will be be set up in each of these four vocational areas to monitor progress.

Effecting Europeanised mainstream curricula may eventually be concerned not only with regulations, language and culture but with working practices, learning methods, work experience and qualifications.


MARKET-LINKED CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
Market Research
1992 Information
Curriculum Development
Alert employers to implications of 1992
Survey employers' interests and needs
Establish industry-related training profiles and current state of preparedness
Alert training providers to employers' needs
MONITOR PROGRESS TOWARDS SINGLE MARKET
Undertake selective curriculum development projects:
• awareness-raising seminars
• health and agriculture checks
• language services
• export marketing
• communications
• financial transactions
• contractual relations
• quality assurance and control
• consumer protection
• accounting practices
• employment regulations
Design and run pilot programmes
Evaluate pilots
REVIEW CURRICULUM MARKET NEEDS AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT
Initiate marketing programme
Maintain curriculum development momentum
INSTITUTE ROUTINE MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS AND REVIEWS

A 1992 training needs checklist

- Agriculture and health checks
- Awareness raising concerning the progress and implications of the single market
- Commercial and financial practices
- Consumer protection and food hygiene
- Languages
- Management and organisational skills
- Marketing, sales and distribution
- New technologies in commerce and manufacturing
- Quality assurance and control
- Tendering and procurement

There is also the area of Community law. Aspects with which companies are likely to be concerned during the run up to 1992 and after include:

- standards, testing and certification;
- public purchasing;
- company law, in particular the European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG);
- intellectual policy;
- competition policy;
- unfair barriers to trade and enforcing rules;
- consumer protection;
- Community institutions and procedures;
- selling in the single market;
- franchising in the Community.

Case study one

Community law and trading

Inter-state trading under Community regulations poses legal dilemmas for experienced and new exporters alike.

A British manufacturer has developed a new product and wishes to maximise sales worldwide, but in particular in Europe. The company has no existing network of sales outlets in the Netherlands, and wishes to enter into a commercial arrangement with a Dutch sales distribution firm so as to promote and sell a new product.

Although the Dutch firm is willing to spend a considerable amount in advertising and promotion in the Netherlands, it wants to be granted exclusive distributorship. The UK company feels this is reasonable, in that no selling organisation would be willing to commit expenditure in making a new product known only to see rival sales firms quickly taking advantage of this work.

Both UK and Dutch companies may be happy with these arrangements, yet it could amount to a breach of Article 85 of the Treaty of Rome, in that agreement prevented other sales organisations operating in the Netherlands. In effect, it would isolate the Dutch market, by setting up barriers to the free flow of the product throughout the Community. The arrangements could be regarded as a restraint on competition, and both parties could be fined.

On the other hand, provided certain steps are taken at appropriate times, the parties could obtain immunity from fines while still enjoying the benefits of the agreement. An application could be made to the European Commission for a formal exemption. Although the Commission's ruling may take a long time and be against the parties, fines would not be imposed retrospectively.

This would be one of several ways in which the companies could come to an arrangement and achieve their objectives. Another would be for the UK manufacturer to appoint the distributor to be its agent for sales in the Netherlands. This would mean that the Dutch organisation would be selling the product on behalf of the manufacturer, not on its own behalf, as in the case of a non-agency arrangement.

Community law is superimposed on the internal laws of each member state and, although it is an integral part of UK law, it is quite unlike any other part of it. It is, therefore, essential that college lecturers in law and related subjects be aware of the basic principles and pervasive nature of Community law.

Case study two

Language training

Wadkin Durham is a firm of about 200 employees, making woodworking machinery. The 1992 campaign has confirmed the company's view that there are opportunities in Europe, and decisions have been made to enter the German and French markets.

Priority areas identified include the need for an ability to participate in European exhibitions, the speed of response to foreign enquiries, and efficient communication with other countries.

Initial training was to help the firm's marketing and reception staff, and was effected through an intensive course of 20 hours for the marketing manager and staff. Emphasis was on spoken skills in business and social contexts and on commercial German for use in correspondence and telex messages.

The benefits of language training in the 1992 context include:

- increasing rapport with overseas contacts;
- giving the company a better understanding of overseas contacts' needs;
- helping employees to feel more comfortable overseas, and to be more successful;
- helping gain a specific business advantage;
- reducing delays.

It has been established that engineering companies, small firms and those which export less than 30 per cent of their output are particularly weak in foreign language skills, and this is likely to hamper their ability to succeed in the single market.

Companies seeking foreign language training have several options. The most popular source of training is college evening classes. Self-study and intensive courses provided by private trainers are next most popular, followed by tailormade courses from colleges.

Those experienced in the marketing of language training have discovered that:

- companies are most likely to favour a provider they know, so getting a 'foot in the door' is important;
- first-time buyers of language training see price and flexibility as the two most important criteria affecting choice;

• for experienced buyers, the reputation of the provider and the quality and perceived success of the training are most important.

Potential clients can encounter a wide range of unwanted difficulties in arranging training, from getting through to appropriate people on the telephone, to being obliged to fill out laborious college enrolment forms. College image can, in some cases, also be a negative factor.

A professional approach should feature:

• a fast initial response;

• a client-centred approach;

• a fast follow-up to the sales interview;

• a speedy turn-around on contracts, correspondence and invoices.

Case study three

Assuring quality

The company in question is a small manufacturing firm with 25 staff, mostly unskilled women assembly workers. The one qualified engineer is also quality control manager. The firm was set up to supply electronic components for inclusion in the products of a large exporter.

This exporter was seeking BS 5750 (internationally ISO 9000) registration in order to strengthen its competitive position in Europe. Quality would, however, depend on that of suppliers' products, including those of the small manufacturing firm.

This small firm felt vulnerable and obtained a grant from the Department of Trade and Industry to commission a consultant's report.

This concluded that:

• There was a pressing need to improve business management expertise within the company.

• The company should aim to expand its product range and seek other markets.

• It must urgently establish quality assurance systems, via BS 5750 being considered the best route.

• Measures had to be taken both to absorb the cost of implementing this strategy and to reduce other manufacturing costs.

The training implications of the report ranged from management, financial control and marketing to quality assurance.

The company's owner saw the last as most essential for survival. It would enable the major customer to be retained against competition from European and more effective UK suppliers. It would also give a marketing advantage with other potential customers in the domestic market, as well as enabling the firm to consider expansion into Europe.

Quality assurance training was commissioned from the local college of further education and involved all employees.

The workforce was included in initial discussions about quality assurance and the characteristics of the firm's products. Four members of staff in supervisory or inspection roles were identified as key personnel and undertook an intensive course based on an open learning package.

Preparations were also made for BS 5750 registration.

For further information about FEU work in relation to 1992, please contact Martin Johnson, FEU, 2 Orange Street, London WC2H 7WE. Telephone: 01-321 0433 ext. 274. For further copies of this bulletin and details of other FEU publications, please contact the FEU Information Centre at the same address. (tel. ext. 256)

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